

# CHRIST CHURCH WARE

Issue 63

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Ware  
in the  
World



Christ Church Ware  
Jesus led, Spirit empowered, Grace based.

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# John's Journal



from  
**Rev. John Hookway**

Welcome to the summer magazine. We've received lots of positive feedback around the new approach in the last issue and so have done our best to fill this one with news and stories that encourage faith and spur each other on in the Lord too. The pages ahead serve to remind me just how much God is doing in and through His people. I hope you find inspiration in reading about it!

## Prayer

"Behind everything we do is prayer" must be one of the phrases I am best known for. To continue in prayer and to go deeper is one of the most important ways that we can go forward as a congregation. We want to be an influence for good in our community and I encourage everyone to explore prayer more and more. There are many opportunities to join with others to do just that and in this magazine you will find story after story about the effects of prayer. Why not share your experiences in a future edition?

## Preparing to Launch

We are well on track to be back in the church building in December. What will happen is that the contractors will hand the keys back to us but it will be fundamentally an empty shell.



We will need some time to ready the place for meetings and there is a team of volunteers already working through that detail. Prior to that - I expect mid to late November - I am going to invite regular times of prayer and worship to be held in the new facility. I want the place to be full of prayer and so expect morning, afternoon and evening opportunities to join with me in figuratively raising the roof!

## After Christmas!

If it's a lot to ask you to think about celebrating Christmas whilst it's still summer, forgive me for asking you to turn to February 2020 in your diary! We are firming up details for our official opening event and are have

invited Bishop Alan of St Albans. Over the first weekend of February we will host events on the Saturday and Sunday and are looking at ways to involve the community in that too.



## Rwanda Trip

In mid-July a team of people from our church will be travelling to Rwanda to visit some of the projects that we support, and to see and learn what God is doing elsewhere. There is a special personal connection for me; not only am I travelling with one of my daughters but my mother was born in Burundi where my grandfather was a missionary. He also chaired the Rwanda mission! It's a country that has experienced great pain and suffering in the recent past and I expect that we will see examples of how reconciliation has taken place. That's evidence of a move of God. Please keep us in your prayers.

## 150 Year Celebrations

One of the most enjoyable recent events that I have attended was the anniversary celebrations at Easneye. I had the privilege of

**The Dedicatory Service at Easneye**  
(The following is of interest in view of the house being used by All Nations Missionary Training College)

Headings for prayer by Hannah, Lady Buxton. At the Dedication Service at Easneye taken by Rev. D. B. Hankin, (Vicar of Christ Church) May 14th 1899.

For all who possess the house first. This house is received - is accepted - as the gift and appointed inheritance of God the Father through Christ, with thanksgiving.

In receiving it we earnestly pray that it may be a habitation of God through the Spirit.

That Christ should dwell in this house - reign in it - as the Lord and Master, loved and obeyed.

That He should watch over it with His merciful, providential care and protecting power, averting terrible trials and sorrows by His presence and love.

That every possessor of this inheritance may by the Lord be called to the knowledge and love of Christ, and be His child by adoption and grace.

That God may be ever glorified, worshipped, confessed and served by His children here, and that zeal for Christ, benevolence and generosity to man, may ever distinguished the inhabitants so that it may be a centre of blessings not only received but communicated.

Secondly, for the present family.

Most hearty thanksgiving for past mercies in spiritual things, gifts and privileges; in abounding temporal gifts and now for this new habitation and place.

Prayer to receive it with hearty love and thankfulness, and with true submission and patience under any crosses which may attend it.

For health, and if it may be, for prolonged life to enjoy it, and to fulfil the duties called for by the possession of it.

That there may be hearts set, not upon the house, but upon the glorious inheritance prepared by Christ for His people, the heavenly country, the continuing city.

That they may here grow in peace and grace, in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, and themselves be more than ever diligent in promoting His cause and dispensing good things to men.

That the children of this family may be enriched by Divine Grace, and each as they advance in years, give themselves to the service of God.

That the servants of this house may be blessed and receive spiritual benefit and temporal powers, and serve as to the Lord.

That all who live here, now or in the future, may so believe, and live, and serve, that everyone may be gathered into the Heavenly Kingdom through, and in Christ Jesus, our only Lord and Saviour.

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taking part in my role as vicar, mirroring the role that Rev Hankin, the second ever Vicar of Christ Church undertook 150 years ago at the dedication service. The desire of Lady Hannah at the time was that the house would be a blessing in God's service which it clearly has been, especially in its current guise as All Nations. There is an even more personal connection for me as I am the fourth great grandson of Lady Hannah!

## Developing People

One of the things that gives me the most pleasure is watching people's journey of transformation under God. I see that in so many ways in our congregation; CAP clients having their lives changed, others stepping out in their ministries - the list is endless.

The recent sermon series touched on rebuilding the temple but it was as much a metaphor for rebuilding and developing His people at the same time. We are experiencing both, of course, as we are now a good way through our Development Project. While the temporary move is exciting, I am even more excited about how we as a church continue to be changed for His future.

## A fond farewell

It's been a joy to have Caroline with us as curate and to see her grow and develop. We want to be a church that is ready and willing to give our best away to the service of God and we do that with Caroline and Michael, with gratitude for their service. They will not be far away and I know that you will pray and support them in their journey.



## Summer Break

For many of us, the weeks ahead offer a chance to take a break. A whole bunch of us will be doing that together at events like New Wine and Soul Survivor and no doubt we will share Godly experiences together. Additionally, closer to home, we will be running our own Summer Club and there are ways to be involved if you are interested. Whatever kind of break you take, may God bless you and give you peace in it.



## Your Magazine

We have been overwhelmed by the response to the magazine and it is wonderful to be able to fill it with stories from such a range of contributors. We want to make it something that informs, involves and inspires faith and encourages thankfulness for all that God is doing.

There are several ways that you can get involved. The best way to do that is to write to us at [magazine@christchurchware.co.uk](mailto:magazine@christchurchware.co.uk) with the idea (not with the finished article) that you have for consideration. We can then help you think about the best way to get your news across.

You can never tell us too early; our next magazine is out in late September but we already have over half of it allocated! Our deadline is 6th September but we do not want surprise submissions on that day! We are on the lookout for contributors on:

- Creativity in Worship and want to hear from people who use the Arts in worship.
- New Wine & Soul Survivor- perhaps keep a diary?
- Testimonies. There are wonderful ones in this issue. Would you share your answers to prayer?

And what about our front cover stars? *Ware in the World* can you get your picture taken with this issue?

Let us know if you want to contribute.

Next Magazine deadline is early September, but the earlier we receive your input the better!  
Publication Date: Sunday 22nd September.

FRONT COVER: (Clockwise from top left)

Sarah Wicks and Claire Hallett braving the cold in just their bras, for the 2019 London Moonwalk. Raising money for Walk the Walk Breast Cancer Charity.

Jess Cole, our Children's Worker, at the top of Snowdon!

Gary Parkes outside United Mission Hospital in Tansen, Nepal, where he and Debbie have been volunteering for the past three months.

Sue Ilott at Lindisfarne in Northumberland.

Robert and Ruth Boulton visiting their daughter, Charlotte, in Sri Lanka.

Neil and Alex Greaves at Wembley watching Aston Villa win the Championship Play-off final.



# A welcome invitation



from  
**Martin Dudley**

*What if they laugh at me or think less of me? What if they label me as a narrow-minded, judgmental, hypocritical Bible-thumper? Or what if they actually come? Then what?*

We've sunk an amazing amount of time and energy into becoming a welcoming church—we've trained people, wore name tags and brewed coffee. Naturally, we want to make it easy for someone we don't know to come into Christ Church and be made to feel welcome but I'd contend that from a missional perspective, waiting for visitors and guests to drop by is passive.

Inviting is different from welcoming – it's active and means that we leave the comfort of Sunday morning worship and seek out our neighbours. Being an inviting church starts with who God has called us to be as church and mandates joining God at work in the world. Only when we are centred in this purpose can we become an inviting church. What does this look like in action? Something like...

While in conversation over the garden fence, you invite a neighbour who is in pain after losing a loved one to join you for a coffee and a chat. Over coffee you share about "my church" and invite them along.

When in the staffroom chatting about the pressures of work, you invite a co-worker to your Bible study.

While waiting for your children to get out of school, you talk with a parent about the struggles of parenting and invite their family to our churches upcoming family picnic.

Being an inviting church involves sharing God with people outside the walls of the church building. Perhaps you already do this but I know that it can be terrifying to step outside comfort zones and establish a pattern of inviting friends to attend worship. What if they laugh at me or think less of me? What if they label me as a narrow-minded, judgmental, hypocritical Bible-thumper? Or what if they actually come? Then what?



Perhaps being invitational seems too big, too audacious, too frightening, so we simply don't do it. I have been trying to break it down into bite-size chunks...why not see if one of these works for you?

### CHALLENGE 1

Try using the phrase "my church" in a conversation with one person each week. It's as simple as talking with just one person one time each week during the month.

### CHALLENGE 2

Consider one word or phrase that describes your congregation well, then use that word to finish the phrase: "My church is \_\_\_\_." When we start looking for opportunities to bring up our church in conversation, it's amazing how often they arise.

### CHALLENGE 3

Think about one thing our church does very well. Perhaps it's children's ministry, education, music, social activism or a mid-week group. Use that to finish the phrase: "My church is really good at \_\_\_\_."

### CHALLENGE 4

Invite one person to check out something we're involved in. This should be done in appropriate conversations when an opening naturally presents itself—it should not feel forced or manipulated.

### CHALLENGE 5

Invite someone you know to come to worship with you. This seems to be the most frightening invitation for many to make. Remember, the basis of our identity as people of God is our new life given to us in Jesus Christ. When we quit pushing that on others and simply be that through caring relationships, we reveal the love of God.

My challenge to us all is to be an inviting church every day of the week whilst welcoming on Sunday!

# A life changing experience with CAP

Christ Church has been in partnership with Christians Against Poverty to provide a debt counselling service to our local community for more than five years. To help you see the impact of this service and of our wider church community, I asked one of my clients if they would share a bit of their story.

### What has working with CAP had meant to you?

"Lifeline!!! CAP represents hope and is an organisation that listens and cares. Already it has taken a huge weight off my shoulders. A weight that was crushing me. Since coming to CAP, I've got a new perspective and feel like I'm on a path towards putting things in order. It took away my hopelessness – I had no plan, no strategy and didn't know where to begin. CAP went beyond debt counselling – it introduced me to a community which has relieved my loneliness and given me emotional support and strengthened my faith. Life took me in a different direction away from a place of faith but the church community has brought me back and I've met many wonderful people who have helped restore my hope."

asked if we could pray and within minutes the phone rang with a total change of tone from the council and an offer of help to enable me to stay in my home. The second time was with the utility company who had told me beyond all doubt that they would not listen to me and had a warrant to enter my home. You told me that you and others would pray, you called CAP, and a different person from the utility company then spoke to me like a human being and gave me the chance I needed. Both times these came at a point where I thought that God had given up on me, I couldn't take anymore, there was no hope and maybe God just didn't care. But when we prayed, he softened people's hearts and showed me that he really did care! It used to be something strange for me to ask God for something and

christians  
against  
poverty

**CAP**  
debt help



from  
**Sam Rich**

*For the first time  
in ages I realised  
I wasn't alone  
anymore.*



### What was happening in your life before we first met?

"I've struggled with depression for a long while. This is a form of paralysis and it's difficult to explain. You can't even begin to help yourself. Even those who are trying to help you can get frustrated because it looks like you aren't even trying. The problems of life can even transform your character and cause you to lose your personality even to the point where I considered ending my own life. I am now in a very different place and even my family perceive me differently and more positively."

### What was the turning point for you?

"When we prayed together and God stepped in so obviously – twice!!! The first time was when all hope was lost and I was definitely going to lose my home. I had given up. You

rather I thought I just had to rely on myself but through all this, I've learned that turning to God first is a much better idea! Now I have hope! It's still hard but I can know with God's help I can tackle one thing at a time and I'm not alone."



**Please pray:** This prayer request is actually for a classmate of their daughter. "Please pray for my friend Josh who is suffering from terminal cancer." If we could pray for him and his family, that could be great.

If you, or someone else you know, are struggling with debt, phone  
**0800 328 0006**  
to make an appointment



# Journey of Faith



from  
**Caroline and  
Michael Keightley**

*We soon bid farewell to our curate Caroline. She arrived as a single lady in pursuit of experience and direction from God and leaves having met and married Michael and gained a very clear sense of what is coming next in ministry. We sat down with them to find out how potential sheep rustling led to a date with destiny...*



*I've seen commitment time and time again, people giving their best. It's been moving and inspiring to see the hunger for God among the people*

**Q. For both of you, God is central to life. How did you come to faith?**

**Michael:** My parents started attending church in Stevenage when I was eleven. There was not "one moment" for me; it was a series of experiences that led to a life of faith. I do recall a New Wine conference when I was thirteen as an important turning point. Mike Pilavachi preached and I remember being very moved; hours of tears on my knees.

**Caroline:** And madly, although we initially thought our first meeting was in a pub two years ago, I've just realised that I was at that same New Wine event! I became a Christian as a 14 year old. My faith journey started as a consequence of being threatened with suspension from school in Oxfordshire. That led to a big heart to heart with my mum until 0300 in the morning. That's an important detail because somehow we turned on the TV and there was Nicky Gumbal presenting an Alpha course! I promised my mum that if an Alpha course was on nearby, I would attend. Little did I know that a couple had arrived in town doing church planting- and they ran the course! I attended with my mum and that was pivotal to coming to faith

**Q. That's how you met God. How did you meet each other?**

**C:** In a pub around three years ago quite near the start of my placement at Christ Church!

**M:** I think we both felt immediately that God had arranged the meeting. Our conversation went on for hours and we both had a sense immediately that this was far more than a random social event. We lost track of time but of course Caroline left me wondering if she wanted to go on a second date.

**C:** Michael tried to act casual but texted me within a few hours!

**M:** I loved the fact that she had such enthusiasm to experience life. I've seen her jump in a river spontaneously as well as suggesting grabbing a kebab, putting on head torches and going on walks and prayer time. That led us up a hill in Bedfordshire one evening where the police suspected we were sheep rustling rather than being a young couple communing with the creator of the universe!

**Q. And the proposal?**

**C:** I'd warned him that if that day ever came, make sure I was having a good hair day. On the big day, he sent me off to Maria Lawrence, encouraged me to dress nicely and whisked me off to a restaurant where the staff had prepared a special reception. What else could I say but yes.

**Q. Turning to church life, how did being in a relationship affect things?**

**M:** In an ideal world, we would have been at

the same church at the same time but I have a job with Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB). That has always meant that I have some responsibilities there that has kept me from being with Caroline for the traditional Sunday morning services. But that's going to change soon!

**C:** Michael has been involved in lots of aspects of Christ Church and I think Escape is a great example – and highlight- of where we have worked together.



**M:** I'll take lots of positive memories from the church. It's really impressive to see so many people so committed to God and the number of ministries that people of all ages provide to the community. It's an inspiring congregation.

**Q. And Caroline, your reflections on Christ Church?**

**C:** My wedding will always be a very special memory. Sharing that with the church family was precious. Overall, the answer is "the people" and the relationships formed. I could list person after person or any number of events but it's always about the shared relationships.

Having said that, I have to describe Escape as a stand out and how God moved. Seeing young people in the church grow and develop – to really fly- is something that has inspired me; that's something I am determined to take forward.

**Q. A lesson or experience from your time that is going to help you in the months ahead?**

**M:** We were packing up after the Escape event and Bill said to me "it's like we made a new place for people to come and be." It struck

me that it was much more than the logistics – it was a community. It inspires me to build those spaces for people to meet God.

**C:** I've learnt about doing the best I can; excellence in ministry and service. I've seen commitment time and time again, people giving their best. It's been moving and inspiring to see the hunger for God among the people.

**Q. And finally, the next steps?**

**C:** I'm going to be the vicar of St Mark's at Colney Heath which is an evangelical C of E church – and I can't wait to lead them into a new season. The congregation is around 100 strong and are very active. We complete our time at Ware in late July. By the way, there is an open invitation to my installation service on September 12th.

**M:** Clergy are gently encouraged to be discreet when visiting public church services that you are considering applying to. There are no such guidelines for spouses so I went along "undercover." I slipped in to a meeting and found the welcome profound and moving. In departing, one lady said "I love this church and hope you come back." I got to my car, cried my eyes out and wanted that place to be my church.



**C:** I felt strongly that it was the place for me but I had always prayed that God would give Michael a heart for it too. It was a beautiful thing that God melted both our hearts – but separately.

*My wedding will always be a very special memory. Sharing that with the church family was precious*



**Please pray:**

- We finish well at Christ Church
- We start well
- We minister together
- More and more revelation from God.



# My Playlist

Richard picks the tunes for the playlist of his life...

**My first song:** Not dissimilar to a lot of people from my era, my first song was the 7" vinyl single 'Do they know it's Christmas' by (the original) Band Aid line-up. Bought with record tokens from WHSmith in Exeter.



from  
**Richard Marlow**

**My worship song:** Growing up very near the coast 'My Lighthouse' really resonates as God being a beacon in times of calm and times of storm.

**My dancefloor song:** 'Walking on Sunshine' by Katrina and the Waves – the second song played at our Wedding Reception after the first dance.

**My guilty pleasure song:** 'Ooh Aah, Just a Little Bit' by Gina G. A Eurovision entry that deserved to do so much better.

**My special moment song:** 'Pachelbel's Canon'. A beautiful piece of music that was played at our wedding service. Aficionados may also like to note it was used in The Farm's 'All together now' tune from the 90s – another great song.

**My last song:** I have never even considered this one! Probably Frank Sinatra's 'My Way' (my second choice The Levellers' 'One Way').



# Chapter & Verse

Ann has been a member of Christ Church since 1985 and one morning recently felt God giving her inspired thoughts to share with us on a favourite Bible passage.



from  
**Ann Yates**

'Justice' has always been a massive part of my outlook on life. I try to live for Jesus and care for people whenever I can, to be there for them and to be on the lookout for others in need. That comes from my own experience of being in need in my own life; I know what it's like to be without faith, hope and love. That's why one of my favourite parts of the Bible is 1 Corinthians, chapter 13. Like many people, my son John had it read as part of his wedding "...these three remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love."

When I look at Ware, and the whole world, I see a lot of injustice. Homelessness, poverty and loneliness are things I see all the time. When I first came to church I had needs like those and I felt God and His people really wrap their love around me. We don't go to church because we are perfect, we can grow all the time – in faith, hope and love.

**FAITH** Hebrews says that to have faith is to be sure of things we hope for to be certain of the things we cannot see. When we go through life, we face many changes. What school will I go to? What is the right job for me? As we get older, we have different challenges to face. In Galatians 2:20 it says that we should live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me. I'd encourage everyone to feed their spirit by following Jesus. Your faith will get stronger.

**HOPE** If we put our hope in God then he will renew our strength. It says that in Isaiah 40. I'd be surprised if any of us had not experienced disappointment at some time in life. God knows about every single one of them and we must keep taking them to Him in prayer and have hope. God is working in us to shape and build us into the image of Jesus, his highest passion.

**LOVE** Surely the greatest love of all is that God gave us His only Son and He died for us. Our job is to show that love. We have people left on our streets to freeze to death, people who do not have enough money to feed their kids or pay the rent or mortgage. Daily lives are ruined by gambling, drugs and drinking problems. It destroys families. These can happen to any of us.

Thankfully, we are seeing in our own church that God is working through CAP to help people and show God really cares. Help exists and we can pray for these people and ask for God's guidance.

It is easy to judge others and they are times we may all be angry and hang on to these things that make us angry and hold on to the grudges with people with problems. It is our God that teaches us to forgive and love our neighbour as ourselves.

# A Day in the Life

A day in the (school) life of Jess Cole our Children's Worker...

On **Monday mornings** I lead assemblies at Christ Church School and base them on the values for the half term. We have been exploring truthfulness recently and I usually get the children involved in a game or activity. It's an amazing opportunity to share about Jesus. I have made a Bible box and each week a child will come and open the 'Bible' while the rest of the children chant and clap 'what's in the bible'. In the box there is an object which links to the story. We always say the Lord's Prayer together before closing in song.



At **Monday lunchtime** I make myself available for any children who want to drop in to see me. This might mean sharing worries or just a chat. I'm there to listen.

On **Wednesdays** I take six children and play games or do a craft activity. The aim is to spend time simply nurturing them as individuals and building up good relationships and trust. I love it when I am out in Ware and a child walks past with their parents and often says 'Hello Jess!' Who knows where this might lead to?

The rest of my day I spend in the office where



I do all my planning for the assemblies, lunch clubs, socials, Sunday morning children's church sessions and any other admin. At the moment I am also busy thinking through all the many details for the holiday club!

**Holiday Club** - I am passionate about reaching out to the community to tell them about Jesus and believe this holiday club is a fantastic opportunity to do so in a fun, exciting way and to build relationships between the church and these children and their families in a fun environment. I have never run one before and so appreciate the wise words and input I have received from those with experience!

We will be using a Scripture Union resource called Team Builders, using Bible stories to explore the nature of a "team" to show what it means to work together and ultimately be part of Jesus' team.

The Holiday Club is for 5-11 year olds and is happening 12th-15th August in the mornings at Christ Church centre. If you are available to help on any or all of the days please speak to me.



**How I get myself in the position to do this?** - I always try to start the day with some time reading my Bible and bible notes and praying. I am attempting to read the Bible in a year (might take me a bit longer!). I also try to walk to work as often as I can as I love spending this time praying about the day, asking God to guide my thoughts and actions. As a staff team we meet in the morning to pray together and read scripture.

I am an extrovert but have found it so helpful to be able to return to my quiet flat at the end of the day where I can reflect, finish reading the chapters for the day (if I ran out of time in the morning!) and relax. Two things that have really helped sustain me are belonging to a Life Group and having a prayer partner... if you don't have either of these I really recommend doing so!



from  
**Jess Cole**



**Please pray:**

- My school role - RE lessons are on the agenda for the future.
- For every aspect of the Holiday Club and wisdom in how to lead the various groups.
- Increased discipline in reading my Bible.



# Men at Work with God (or 'Ageing Better in Birmingham')



from  
**Andrew du Boulay**



and  
**Andrew Wang**

God has given each one of us different gifts. When we team together with God, these gifts become powerful tools that can be used to support God's mission for our church. For the last four years the MADD group have sent working parties in support of our mission partners James and Mel Lynch in Birmingham, who work with Interserve, a missionary organisation looking to build up links between the Christian and Muslim communities in the area. Our main purpose was to work on the buildings and in the grounds of St. John's, a former Anglican nunnery, which is now the home of a small Christian community involved in outreach to the people of Alum Rock in East Birmingham. Parts of the building are also being converted to offices to serve as Interserve's headquarters in the UK.

Six men made the trip this year – Richard Clayden, Peter Dane, Andrew du Boulay, Neil Pearce, Ron Porter and Andrew Wang. The two big jobs were to move a summer house, including its base and to work on a flat recently occupied by the community's new hosts Liz and Allen. God's timing is immaculate because they had only just arrived from long term mission in Pakistan, so the many small jobs we were able to do really helped to make them feel comfortable and welcome in their new home. In addition, we completed many other tasks including installing a screen in the chapel, sanding and varnishing two refectory tables and a dresser, moving a tree and some very heavy memorial stones.

Each trip has allowed us to learn more about James and Mel's work with the local community. Mel continues to run Women of Worth, a craft and conversation outreach, while James is actively engaged with the local community forum and also increasingly through connections with the St Margaret's Unity Hub which is part church (Sundays only!)



and part community centre. We were able to talk to the manager there and learn how holding Muslim activities in a Christian space is helping to break down misconceptions about different faiths. We also visited a local mosque, which was made up of two converted terraced



houses. As the houses were not orientated towards Mecca, the worship hall had to be placed at an angle to the walls. The Imam was very friendly and patiently answered our questions, even though it was only a short time before the main prayers on Friday.

We also joined in the life of the community at St. John's. This included morning and evening prayers, and midday communion. We found it was very important to take these breaks from our work activity and reconnect with God. It was amazing the dividend gained from prayer which more than compensated for the apparently lost time.



Each year our accommodation has improved in quality. This year we each had our own individual rooms, with tea and coffee making facilities. Next year we will be expecting en-suite bedrooms! We were also well looked after by our hosts who are excellent chefs and shared some special Pakistani dishes with us as well as a MADD shepherd's pie.



# James and Mel Lynch

*James & Mel work with Interserve seeking to help and encourage Christians and churches to relate to and to build relationships with the community around them and share the good news of Jesus Christ. James and Mel have worked for 11 years in partnership with Riverside Church in the communities of South Birmingham. For the past 4 years they have divided their time between this and several new community development projects in East Birmingham.*



from  
**James & Mel Lynch**

James & Mel divide their time between running established ministry projects and building 1-2-1 relationships with local Muslim folk. Mel runs a ladies project at St John's House, called 'Women of Worth' where she leads craft and discussions over coffee and cake, before the group prays together. Mel is also helping to set up a new project called 'Out of the Shadows'- reaching out to sex-workers in the neighbourhood.

James works with local Muslim men working to make a positive difference in the community through reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and isolation. The group patrols the local Alum Rock neighbourhood several times each week and has seen some really encouraging signs that their efforts are making an impact in an often much troubled local community.

James also serves on the Board of St Margaret's- a church/community project in nearby Ward End. St Margaret's hosts the Unity Hub- a project providing activities and services such as Foodbank and activities for elderly and isolated residents.

Until recently James was the Centre Manager at St John's House, but now that that assignment has come to an end, James is looking for fresh direction in his ministry, but expects to continue serving in the same community, at least for the time-being.

Following the atrocity in March, in Christchurch, New Zealand, James had the opportunity to present flowers to Muslim worshippers at Birmingham Central Mosque. (below). Even in tragedy, the Lord opens doors for His love to be shown in powerful ways.



### Please pray for us:

- For continued favour in the local community where we serve
- For daily wisdom to know how to respond to the challenges presented to us
- For further direction and guidance to know what the Lord would have us do next
- For us to see God's Truth and Love at work in the lives of those who need Him most.







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CARE SERVICES

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### Deborah Mercer

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# Good friends are only a phone call away

*Norman is one of the team travelling to Rwanda in July. Whilst there, he will be re-connecting with a friend with whom he shared a very special phone call...*



"In 1994, I was a minister in a Buntingford church and we hosted a fellow clergy member from Rwanda called Philbert. During the trip the situation in his home country took a terrible turn; in fact there was genocide which ultimately led to around 800,000 lives being lost in a country not much bigger than Wales.

It was an almost unimaginable situation. Philbert had not been able to contact his wife for several weeks even before the atrocities took place and so did not know where his wife Godelieve was – or even if she had survived.

One Sunday evening, we finally managed to get a call through via Uganda and then a radio link into Rwanda to what he believed was a church safe house that she might have fled to. Miraculously, we made contact with her; they used a car battery their end to run the radio link. They spoke in a mixture of English, French and their native tongue but in very hushed tones as they did not want the militia to know that anyone was in this semi-derelict house. The situation was extremely severe; Godelieve and her companions couldn't even move or bury dead bodies in the courtyard in case it aroused suspicion.



from  
**Norman Richards**



Despite the horror, there were tears of joy and prayers at the reunion by phone. Soon after, the UN arrived and we had the privilege of meeting the whole family in a later visit to the UK. In July, we are planning to meet up with Philbert and his family as part of our itinerary."

*Top Left: Rev. Philbert Kalisa with Norman*

*Bottom Left: Godelieve with their daughter Ange*

*Above: Philbert and Godelieve today*



## Be a Star, Sponsor a Chair...

**Yes it really, really, really is happening!**

We are in the final stage of our time out of the church building. All being well we will be moving home in November. However there is a snag, there are no chairs.

So today we OFFICIALLY launch our Sponsor a Chair at all of our services. We will have sample chairs for you to view and test out. The chairs are wooden, stackable chairs, with upholstered seats and backs and some of those at the ends of rows will have arms to assist in getting up or sitting down.

Each chair sponsored is £80 and our target is to have 250 chairs by the end of July that would be SO BRILLIANT! If you want to sponsor a chair (or several) contact Martin on 01920487267 or [manager@christchurchware.co.uk](mailto:manager@christchurchware.co.uk)

I am always happy to answer queries, respond to worries, listen to concerns or hear about offers of help.





# From Welcome to Belonging



from  
June Jarvest

We have all gone to something for the first time or walked into a room where we did not know anyone. What was that experience like and how could it have been improved? This is what everyone involved in welcome is trying to do. June Jarvest shares some aspects of our welcome at Christ Church.

The welcome one receives can really influence whether you will return. Over 50 people are involved in the various welcome roles (Assistant Wardens, Sidespersons or Welcome Desk) on a Sunday morning trying to fulfil our vision statement:

Our aim with God's help is to:  
- **Welcome newcomers and encourage them to engage in the life of the church, right from their first visit until they have a significant sense of belonging and are serving God within Christ Church, so that they can grow in their journey of faith.**

This emphasises that welcome is not just for the initial visit but can take years. My welcome team - Deborah Mercer, Margaret and Neil Pearce at 11am, with Tony Vivers and Wendy Tucker at 9.15, try to know all newcomers but concentrate on building up relationships.

## MEET THE WELCOME TEAM

With over 40 newcomers a year, there is a sizeable portion of our congregation who have joined us in the past few years – some coming very regularly and some more occasionally. Many of you tell us you do not recognise many of the congregation!



Margaret & Neil Pearce and Deborah Mercer



Wendy Tucker and Tony Vivers

## MEET THREE NEWCOMERS

**John and Carol Robinson** - Carol and I first began going to Christ Church about eighteen months ago. Carol is a member of Emanuel Church, but after me losing my driving licence it became difficult for her to attend.



John & Carol Robinson

I felt I had a need to attend church so we tried other churches in the area, but did not like the service, and somebody suggested we try Christ Church, which is in walking distance from where we both live, so we did.

We attended Christ Church where we met a lot of old friends and were introduced to lots of new ones, we attended the Welcome Lunch and felt that we had made the right decision to join Christ Church, we love the 9.15am service, which is the type of service which we enjoy. Thank you Christ Church.

**Cathie Little** - My name is Cathie, I moved to Ware in August after having lived 16 years in East London.

I've been coming to Christ Church with my little boy since September and we have both received a wonderful and warm welcome. He goes to Creche on Sundays and enjoys himself

so much! I feel such a strong sense of community in the church, and a real passion for God.

Now that I've found this gem of a church, I wouldn't want to go anywhere else, and I thank God to have guided me here, where everybody has made me feel at home.

I've also started going to Midweek on Wednesday mornings and have received an amazing welcome from the ladies there as well. Thank you Christ Church.

**David Goodwill** - We lost our daughter Becky November 2017 after a long illness that was diagnosed around 2003. We had Becky's service at Christ Church. Following a number of conversations with John the vicar, I felt drawn to the church. I also felt close to Becky there.

It is difficult to describe the very long list of emotions I experienced during the terrible two years leading up to Becky's death, her passing and afterwards. All I know for certain is that she is with Jesus now.

When I look back, I feel very emotional and grateful for the love and support I have experienced from John, Caroline and all of the ministry team. Also, so many people have been supportive and understanding.

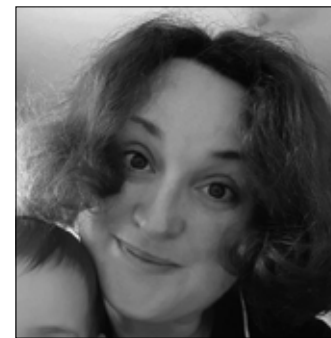
In order to be brief, I've had to keep this list short so sorry if you are not mentioned. My everlasting thanks go to everyone but especially to these very, very special people – Eddy, Neil, Wendy and Bruce.

Lastly thank you to the Holy Father and Jesus for their gracious mercies.

## CHALLENGE

Although the majority of newcomers experience a good first welcome, some find it more difficult to engage in life at Christ Church and to feel that they truly belong.

True welcome is an enormous task so it is so encouraging to see many people welcoming visitors and newcomers and we now receive many positive comments about our welcome.



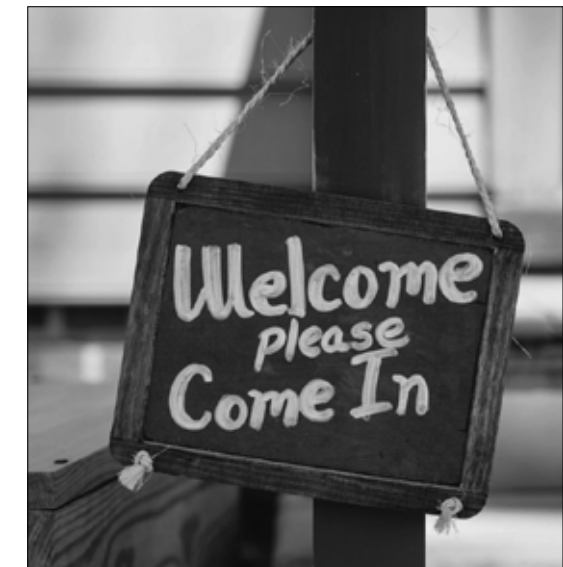
Cathie Little

## NEW VENTURES – SUNDAY LUNCH

The Welcome Team like to introduce newcomers to Christ Church members who might have something in common. In addition, we have just started to arrange for people to invite a suitably matched newcomer to have Sunday lunch together. We would like to expand these two ideas.

## IF YOU ARE NEW AND WANT TO FIND OUT MORE

- Visit the Welcome Desk & speak to a welcomer who can explain what Christ Church has to offer for you.
- Fill in a contact form and you can receive the church weekly newsletter by email and other information.



## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

- Please continue to look out for those on their own and introduce yourself whether they are new or been in the church for years! It is always good to get to know others!
- If you are willing to be introduced to newcomers or are willing to offer a suitably matched newcomer Sunday lunch or coffee on an occasional basis, please speak to one of us or contact us at [welcome@christchurchware.co.uk](mailto:welcome@christchurchware.co.uk)

**Please pray:** That we would be a welcoming congregation where people are accepted for who they are. For all welcomers to foster a real sense of belonging for everyone.



*continue to look out for those on their own and introduce yourself whether they are new or been in the church for years!*



# Who do you think you are?



from  
**Claire Hallett**

*There is a huge difference between knowing something in your head and living it in your heart. For Claire, that has been a life long struggle; outwardly successful but feeling very different inside. Recently, God stepped into the middle of her situation in dramatic fashion...*

Every day, I would tell myself "you are stupid, fat and ugly." If anyone complimented me, I thought they were lying. Having cancer did nothing to improve my self-esteem. Over the last few months, God had been nudging me about how He sees me through songs like 'You Say' by Lauren Daigle but one Sunday, He decided I wasn't listening to the soft, still voice so He shouted through a megaphone!

Ironically, I had just met a friend who had told me about an extraordinary, supernatural encounter she had experienced so drove home thinking "How come God never speaks so clearly to me?" and answered myself with "because you are rubbish." Fast forward to Sunday at church with the song 'Break Every Chain' on my mind. Caroline spoke on the armour of God and how so many Christians believed themselves to be bad and didn't like themselves. I was fascinated and listened intently.

John led a time of response and this is where things started getting odd.

I heard John say, "Claire this is for you". I looked around to see if there was another Claire in the room. Maybe I imagined it. Again, I heard John say my name and ask me to respond. Then a third time. Up I went for prayer.

'S' asked me what I wanted. "For what John said", was my reply. Afterwards, 'S' said she had independently seen a picture of chains breaking away from me.

Thinking this was all very odd, I asked a friend to confirm that John had said my name. "No - why?" Shaken, I sat for a while before joining my Life Group who were on coffee duty.

'D' who I barely know walked into the kitchen, stood in front of me and said, "Did you listen to the talk?" Yes said I. "To all of it?" Yep. "So why don't you love yourself as Jesus loves you? He loves you so much". 'D' hugged me and walked out leaving me open mouthed.

Before I had time to recover, 'A' approached me and said that the talk was for me. She talked about the Garden of Eden after the fall, the question God had asked Adam and Eve was "Who told you that?". 'A' went on to say that this is what God is saying to me about all the lies I tell myself "Who told you that?". The answer is the devil. And every time I believe them, I am turning away from God.

So, by the end of the morning, I had got the message! I am a loved and precious child of God.

**Please pray for me:** It is hard to change the habits of a lifetime, but I am trying. Every time I think negative things about myself, I check myself and say, "that is a lie and not how God sees me". And I sing a song which says "Walk tall, you're a daughter, a child of God. Be strong please remember who you are. Try to understand you're part of his great plan".



# The Power of God

from  
**Mary Yates**

As Groucho Marx said "I will not join a club that will have me as a member." For most of my life that is how I viewed Church. I was born into a Christian Family, began Sunday School at four years old. Took Scripture Union Exams, and trained at an Anglican College. I spent thirty-seven years of my life teaching Religious Studies but only in one Anglican school, mostly in Secular Comprehensives.

I never really understood what Jesus said to Nicodemus. John 3:v3 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born a new, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

It took me sixty years! On Thursday 14th March my husband underwent spinal surgery to improve his mobility. I was so convinced he was going to die I did not think beyond that date. At 3:00p.m. he went to the operating theatre. I went in search of a newspaper. As I walked around the busy streets of Russell Square, in search of a paper I felt a great calm that I had not felt for weeks, and I'm sure at that moment I was in the hands of God, and born anew.

Pleased to report my husband is doing well.

# Sing unto the Lord a new song

*For Dillon, music is a big part of his faith. He is already exploring ways to study sung worship and we invited him to talk about one of his favourite songs, Reckless Love.*



from  
**Dillon Goodyear**

The words speak to me in very personal ways because I have lived a large part of my life without knowing the love of God. The line "when I was your foe, still your love fought for me" helps me realise that He was fighting for me even when I was turned away and uninterested in letting God into my life.

"When I felt no worth, you paid it all for me" tells me how in my worst times of brokenness God knows exactly how I'm feeling and will help me get through it. This song repeatedly shows us how overwhelming and never ending God's love is even for the most undeserving people.

When listening to my worship playlist at home this is one song that always helps to fill me

more with the spirit of Jesus Christ. It reminds me that we are not alone through the trials and tribulations. We cannot earn nor do we deserve His love but He does anyway! He will do anything to be with us and help us even though we so obviously don't deserve it.

This song tells us that God's unimaginable love is what keeps us going; without it we are weak but with it we are strong. We are all broken in some way and this song reminds me that it is God's amazing love that saves us.

**Please pray for me:** I am exploring ways to receive training in worship leading and am applying to some organisations about that. Please pray that I remain hungry for more of God.



# Postcard from...

*Emma Holland in Cheltenham...*

Hello!! - I am in my last year of University in Cheltenham, studying Primary Education. I have recently finished my final placement with a wonderful (but challenging!!) Year 5 class, and have absolutely loved it ... now all I need to do is write my dissertation and then I'm done! The plan for the foreseeable future is to stick around in Cheltenham, so the job hunt has begun for September!

Alongside placements and university studies, I am still very much involved in the life of Trinity Church. We have recently had Cheltenham Race Week, where I am on the team that organise and run the modern-day slavery awareness events. This year I decided to run an event prior to race week in order to raise awareness of what goes on among Cheltenham locals! With the support of International Justice Mission (IJM), I organised a 24hr Stand For Freedom, where a group of us stood up, non-stop for 24 hours in Cheltenham town centre, talking to passers by about the issue of modern-day slavery. We had a great response from the community - radio stations got in touch and even the local MP came along to show support.

**Please pray for:**

- Wisdom and clarity as I start the hunt for a job - that I find the right school for my first teaching post.
- Peace during this transition time between being a student and a proper working adult!
- Not to let busyness distract me from what needs to come first - my relationship with God



Cheltenham



# Digital Delivery of the Message



from  
**Sian Woodward**

*Sian is leading our social media presence, aiming to share our Good News. She's looking for support and ideas...*

Are you a group leader who wants to tell more people about your group's activities and grow the way our church lives out God's Good News in community? Are you a ministry leader with messages that explain some of the things we care about to our local and wider community? Do you have information and ideas about how people might get involved through our church with issues that might appear in the news like debt support or environmental matters? If so, we would like to hear from you.

The Bible is full of people sharing God's good news in different ways, and working hard to make sure that it is heard and understood. The words of prophets were recorded on scrolls and read in public; Jesus used stories about shepherds and vineyards; and Paul wrote letters to churches as they grew. We need to continue this tradition, using the tools available to us, and taking the Message to places where people

spend time. These days, a lot of people spend time using digital tools like Facebook and Twitter to communicate online, so the Christ Church community needs to make



sure we are found in these places, sharing God's amazing Good News.

Tools are no good on their own though. Paul didn't send letters with nothing in them, Jesus didn't gather people on a mount and say nothing. So think of me as a scribe and social media platforms as your postal service. I'm waiting for all the stuff to write in the 'letter' to 'post' it to the communities online – what do you want to tell them? Look out for the form we'll be sending round to leaders to help gather together

the messages we want to send, have a chat with me, or email photos, logos and relevant concise details (Who, What, Why When and How) to [digital@christchurchware.co.uk](mailto:digital@christchurchware.co.uk) so that together we can plan how best to use digital tools to tell people about the Kingdom of God.

# A House of Prayer for all the peoples. ISAIAH 56:7



from  
**Mark Hallett**

*On the face of it, Mark is heavily involved in the church's prayer life. He leads the Tuesday lunchtime meeting, is central to previous 24/7 prayer weeks and has been attending the Monday evening combined church prayer sessions. So why does he feel so frustrated about his own lack of prayer?*

"I see the effect that regular prayer has on me, the intimacy of being in the Father's presence and the transformation that occurs in my life as a result. Not only that, but when we join together in corporate prayer, we build both community through being a body united, and we take on the battle in the spiritual realm for the protection and health of our church and community. In the 30 years that I have been a Spirit filled Christian, I have seen time and again that the occasions that I witness God move most powerfully are preceded by intense and purposeful periods of prayer by the whole team involved in each service or event.

So far, so good. In Christ Church, we hear *'Behind everything we do is prayer'* from John at most services but I wonder in practice how true that is. Let me confess that I am highly inconsistent in the time I spend praying, but I remain convinced that this is the key that will unlock power of God in our lives and in our church.

I was deeply challenged when I took Sophie to one of the newly restarted monthly prayer evenings. On the way home, she asked where all of the younger people were. Not only was she the youngest person there, but I was the second youngest! I am concerned for the future health of the church if everyone under the age of 50 leaves corporate prayer to 'other members of the congregation'.

Throughout the gospels and the rest of the scriptures, prayer is integral. I am convinced that the enemy knows this only too well and tries everything to keep us from regular prayer.

I don't always enjoy the prospect of 'a prayer meeting'; however even in my reluctance to attend, I almost always find myself refreshed and challenged by the Holy Spirit. We may be busy with good, even God, things, but if we are too busy to gather together to pray, then I would question whether we are perhaps too busy?

I write these words as a person struggling to live out a rhythm of prayer, but also as someone who believes that God wants to do so much more through us – but in His strength.

If, like me, you sometimes think that that a prayer meeting in church can be a bit "dry" then I challenge you to look again. Not only do the monthly prayer meetings have creative prayer stations, more importantly you'll encounter the presence of God! Alternatively why not try something different while praying together?

How about a group committed to praying for our parish while out running together every week or two, or perhaps people that meet and pray in a different coffee shop (or even pub) every week or two. I would love for the prayer life of our church to have a different time, and even place, for people to gather and pray every day of the week. Let's fill our notice sheet with times that we meet and pray!

I want to be more effective for the Kingdom of God, and I long for God to move in power in Ware. The first step is to recognise the issue and then make a change.... so who's in?

*How about a group committed to praying for our parish while out running together every week or two, or perhaps people that meet and pray in a different coffee shop (or even pub) every week or two*



# Ron's Reflections



from  
**Ron Porter**

It's too big! ..... No!

It's too big to miss!

This is a reflection on a sermon by Darran several weeks ago. (it's what he said!)

Sometimes in our lives we face problems which appear insurmountable. However, remember: Life may give us problems; Jesus gives us solutions!

Like King David, God has given us a Spirit of boldness to stand against the things that may be trying to bring us down.

David's brothers were quaking before Goliath. David got angry and asked who did Goliath

think he was, coming against the Almighty God of Israel (and our God too!). He didn't use Saul's armour or weapons because he was relying on God, not man. He used the skills God had given him and the tools he was familiar with.

Be bold like David; stand up against your problems in the strength of God and with His spirit of boldness in you.

Remember: the problem is NOT too big; it is TOO BIG TO MISS!



# A Day in the life of LoveWare+LiveWare



from **Brett Sutherland**

1. The evening before each LWLW event a group gathers to load the truck. We also take delivery of supplies for the free BBQ

2. The volunteer team gather for breakfast, cooked by the wonderful Eva Illott, followed by worship and prayer: this helps us focus on Jesus for the day ahead

3. The craft tent is always a hive of activity, reflecting God's creativity

4. Cake is a hallmark of LWLW events, and the free cafe is often a starting-point for conversations about God's love being free. A huge thank you to everyone who bakes for us.

Our vision is to continue to serve in the community with arms wide open, sharing God's love. Love Ware; Live Ware provides opportunities to share Jesus and His love for all: speaking first with actions and then grace-filled conversation when invited. At the recent Bank Holiday event, we invited one of the regular volunteers to keep a diary of the day. Brett did that for us and also explains his motivation to be involved...

"I became a Christian in my late 20's so I know what it was like not knowing God and how much of a positive difference becoming a believer made to my life, and I wanted to share that. So I ran a men's Church football team for ten years, to take Church out on to the football pitch. Two worlds that don't usually mix.

When I was asked to help run the sports and games at LWLW I jumped at it. It's great having all the kids of all different ages playing together and getting the parents joining

makes for a very friendly atmosphere. With just jumpers for goal posts and no one caring about the score, it's just good old fashioned family fun.

The part I like best though is the meeting people, whether it's the parents, on or around the pitch or grandparents, in the cafe whilst taking a break. It's a great day and shows church as it is meant to be, welcoming and accepting of all."



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5. The face-painting and nail-bar are popular, and a good chance for a chat and catch up in the queue. What face did Brett choose?

6. Feeding the five-thousand... almost, but rather than loaves and fish we have sausages and burgers. Yum!

7. LWLW events are always supported by our wonderful local PCSOs, who here appear to have apprehended a local wanted fugitive

8. At the end of the day the team disassembles the marquees, packs everything back into the truck, and shares stories of the day. We're usually all exhausted, but it's a rewarding day



# The Last Word



from  
**John Bell**

*It's been a journey and a half to get this far, but God has been with us all the way. As many of you know, I resisted God's voice calling me to ordained ministry at first but here I am with my ordination at the end of June and my Curacy to follow.*

*Almost three years! That's how long we've been at Christ Church and the time is fast approaching when we will leave you all and move on to pastures new.*

It will be tough leaving Christ Church, I have been richly blessed during my time with you all, as we all have as a family, getting to know some truly amazing people, and experience the love of a church family who have supported me every step of the way. Especially during those times when working full time, studying part (full!!!) time, and being a husband and father, as well as just being John, all got a bit too much as deadlines loomed at every turn. But you know what, it's been great! I've loved being a part of Christ Church, getting to know people's stories, who they are, where they've come from, and why they do whatever it is that they do in life. I've loved the opportunities to lead and preach, growing in confidence over the years I've been here. To the lovely lady at the 09:15 service who told me during those first few weeks 'you can smile a bit more you know, we don't bite!', I hope I have done just that. I certainly feel a lot more relaxed and comfortable standing up front and trying to act like I know what I'm doing!

Rebecca really connected with the Midweek group before she started working at one of the schools in Stevenage. It helped make her feel a part of the Christ Church family, and I know she really missed that input when she had to leave.

So, where to now? Well, next stop is another Christ Church – this time in Bedford. I've had the opportunity already to meet a few people from the church and it looks like it's the ideal place for my Curacy, the children are looking forward to getting their own bedrooms, we'll also get a garden, and best of all I have about a fifty metre commute to church when I need to be there, and an office at home for when I don't.

I wanted to finish off by saying a huge thanks to all of you. It's one of those happy-sad times, when we are sad to be leaving but looking forward with excitement (and maybe just a little apprehension) to what God has in store for us next.

We'll be sure to let you know.



*Daniel, John, Rebecca and Sophie.*

**Christ Church, New Road, Ware, Hertfordshire. SG12 7BS**

**Vicar:** Revd John Hookway (487267- ext 204) **Curate:** Revd Caroline Keightley (487267- ext 205)

**Associate Minister:** Revd Norman Richards (01763 289720)

**Youth Pastor:** Christian Cole (487267- ext 203) **Operations Manager:** Martin Dudley (487267- ext 200)

**Church Wardens:** Cheryl Bevan (01992 538257) & Bob Barker (01279 842821) **Treasurer:** Sam Rich (438437)

**www.christchurchware.co.uk email:office@christchurchware.co.uk Parish Office:** Open Mon-Fri 9am-1pm (487267)